

Editors' Introduction

WELCOME to volume 35.1, the first issue marking the thirty-fifth anniversary of *Atlantis* publication!

As readers may recall, our last issue (34.2, Spring 2010) featured articles produced by graduate students who had presented papers at the annual meeting of the Canadian Women's Studies Association/L'association canadienne des études sur les femmes held at Carleton University in 2009. Given the level of response to the call for papers, we were not able to include all of the accepted articles in the special topic issue. Hence, the first four articles offered here constitute the second part of our Women's Studies Graduate Student issue, "Across the Generations in Women's Studies," and similarly reflect the rich diversity of Women's and Gender Studies scholarship in Canada.

The first two articles provide compelling analyses of literary works. In "Troubling Origins," Sharlee Reimer offers a re-reading of Larissa Lai's novel, *Salt Fish Girl* (2002), a fictional work that has been variously "read" by critics as "an Asian Canadian novel, a science fiction novel, a feminist novel, among others." Reimer, however, focuses her analysis on the ways in which *Salt Fish Girl* "renders incoherent" the concept of "authentic origins" and thereby, presents a political critique of "Enlightenment discourses that support racism, sexist, homophobic, and other marginalizing practices." According to the author, this "interrogation of origins" in Lai's novel forms the basis for addressing the question of "coalition politics" - with "shared experience" rather than "shared origins" constituting "a basis for political action." Bianca Rus' "Remapping the European Cultural Memory," focuses on Julia Kristeva's novel, *Murder in Byzantium* (2006). Through her analysis of this text which she argues offers a "remapping of the European tradition" with "feminine creativity and sensibility" at its core, Rus examines issues related to European identity, cultural memory, the

repression of the feminine and the maternal, and the relatively recent political debates over the inclusion of religious references in the European Union's new constitution. She maintains that the "revalorization" of the feminine, as explicated by Kristeva, offers the possibility for "rethinking European identity," thereby, "leaving the question of 'Europe' to be endlessly interrogated and reinvented."

The next two articles address internationalist discourses and graduate student funding in Canadian academic institutions. In "'Thinking Beyond Borders'?" Kate Cairns provides a critical analysis of one of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Breakfast Speaker sessions held during the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences in 2008. Featured was a keynote address by University of British Columbia President Stephen J. Toope entitled, "Canadian Universities and a New Internationalism" and responses to it by members of the SSHRC Governing Council. In interrogating a series of tensions that emerged in this session - global citizenship/ national identity, transnational social justice/ national academic competitiveness in the international realm, "Canadian feminist"/"multicultural" gender values -, Cairns calls for transnational feminist critical interventions as a means to contest the increasingly dominant internationalist discourses within Canadian universities and their reliance on particular "articulations of nationalism, imperialism, and patriarchy." Roslyn Thomas-Long's "Producing the Graduate Student" provides a textual analysis of graduate student scholarship applications (Ontario Graduate Scholarships and SSHRC Fellowships) in an effort to investigate the institutional and discursive processes whereby "worthy" funding recipients, as workers and learners, are produced in Ontario universities. In addition to examining how "the student-subject" is disciplined and codified within an increasingly entrenched academic

market model, Thomas-Long highlights the gendered, class-based, and racialized implications of these institutional processes and practices as well as resistances to them.

In the open topic section, the series of articles included examine a broad spectrum of feminist topics from two main disciplinary perspectives - literature and history. The first three articles engage in feminist analyses of literary works. In "Trois exils, trois femmes, trois Médées du Québec contemporain," Marie Carrière examines three Québec novels - *New Medea* (1974) by Monique Bosco, *La Médée d'Euripide* (1986) by Marie Cardinal, and *Le livre d'Emma* (2002) by Marie-Célie Agnant - as contemporary re-writings of the myth of Medea and her act of infanticide. Cinda Gault's "Independence Versus Community," offers an analysis of two key characters from Margaret Laurence's novels - Hagar in *The Stone Angel* (1964) and Stacey in *The Fire Dwellers* (1969) - and focuses on the incompatible desires for independence and community in these characters' lives set in two different historical periods. As Gault concludes, "Hagar and Stacey are both wives and mothers, and although they fight against confining gender roles, they are trapped as mirror images of each other in the same conflicted space between what they need and what they get; Hagar is crippled by the costs of her independence, and Stacey by the costs of her family." In "Masculine Trans-formations" Mandy Koolen undertakes a reading of Jackie Kay's novel, *Trumpet* (1999). While attentive to questions of gender, race, and nationality, Koolen argues that the text "promotes acceptance of de-essentialized understandings of gender formation" and provides "an unusual critique of transphobia by highlighting the ways that transphobia may negatively affect not only trans-people but also cis-people." In effect, according to Koolen, the novel "shows that the belief that gender identity should reflect one's natal sex may hinder the development of potentially fulfilling relationships with trans-people and restrict the gender options and expressions of all people."

The final three articles explore various

historical topics - ranging from queer femmes and the reiteration of misogyny within butch-femme and radical-lesbian feminist communities in the 1950s to the 1980s, and the gendered career paths of Saskatchewan teachers over the course of the twentieth century, to the historical contours of Hungarian feminisms at the turn of the twentieth century. In "Uncompromising Positions," Anika Stafford tackles the issue of misogyny in relation to femme identified lesbians in the context of North American butch-femme bar culture in the 1950s and 1960s and in radical-lesbian feminist writings of the 1970s and 1980s. Drawing on first-person narratives, psychoanalytic theory, and radical-lesbian feminist critiques thereof, she highlights the ways in which "misogynist discourse can be recreated even as it is challenged" within counter-cultural communities. June Corman's "Gendered Career Paths for Saskatchewan Educators," offers a broad overview of the gendered career paths and divisions of labour in the teaching profession in Saskatchewan between 1905 and 2005. Drawing on oral interviews, statistical documents, and provincial government records, Corman is interested in tracing change over time, taking into account such variables as "composition of teachers, marital status, geographical distribution, salary scales and administrative duties" as well as such factors as "economic cycles, national inventions in wars, changing gender expectations regarding appropriate female and male behaviour, equal rights legislation and struggles to improve the conditions of women and the conditions of working people provincially and nationally." In "Undoing the Collective Amnesia," Agnes Vashegyi MacDonald presents an overview of the history of Hungarian first-wave feminism, documenting the role of key women's organizations as well as of influential women poets and writers. While highlighting the specificities of Hungarian first-wave feminisms, MacDonald also emphasizes that many of the issues tackled were similar to those of other Western women's movements in the same period - education, suffrage,

social reform, public health, labour conditions, sexuality, and marriage. We end the issue with an examination of recent historical scholarship, in the form of Sikata Banerjee's interview with the 2009 CWSA/ACEF Book Prize winner, Norman Smith, author of *Resisting Manchuko: Chinese Women Writers and the Japanese Occupation* (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 2007).

In this issue, then, the editors of *Atlantis* are pleased to highlight some of the significant scholarly contributions being made by Women's and Gender Studies graduate students in Canada. In addition, the articles included in this issue continue to exemplify the breadth, diversity, and vitality of feminist literary and historical scholarship in the country and outside its borders. In keeping with the international scope of the issue, we are pleased to have as cover art a photo of the European Court of Human Rights, Strasbourg, France, taken by Brad Gibb.

We wish to extend thanks to Michele Byers for her work as the *Atlantis* book review editor over the last few years. And we invite you to go to the *Atlantis* website to see more about our 35th anniversary celebration offerings – www.msvu.ca/atlantis.